

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 01544 121632Z
ACTION AF-10

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R 121000Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6654
INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMCONSUL BUKAVU

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID
SUBJECT: CEPGL SUMMIT: NOWHERE TO GO BUT UP

REF: KIGALI 1483

1. IT WAS NOT AMOMENTOUS EVENT. SUMMIT MEETING AT
GISENYI (RWANDA) SEPTEMBER 9-10 OF PRESIDENTS OF GREAT
LAKES STATES--RWANDA, BURUNDI, ZAIRE--EVIDENTLY BOGGED
DOWN IN PAROCHIALISM AND SIMPLE PENURY. DESPITE ELABORATE
TRILATERAL PREPARATIONS AT SUBMINISTERIAL LEVEL AND A
LENGTHY AGENDA PROJECTING PLANS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
IN A VARIETY OF AREAS, PRESIDENTS AND THEIR FOREIGN
MINISTERS PROVED UNABLE TO AGREE ON MUCH MORE THAN
KEEPING BORDER STATIONS OPEN LATER AT NIGHT AND PLANNING
CONSTRUCTION, UNDER, CEPGL AEGIS, OF A BOTTLE-MAKING
FACTORY IN BUJUMBURA.

2. RWANDA, AT LEAST, HAD HOPED FOR CONSIDERABLY MORE.
GOR HAD SPOKEN HOPEFULLY OF PROJECTS AIMED AT LIBERALIZING
MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, GOODS, SERVICES, AND CAPITAL AMONG
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PAGE 02 KIGALI 01544 121632Z

THREE MEMBER COUNTRYIES. CEPGL SECRETARIAT, HOWEVER,
RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAFTING A CONVENTION TO IMPLEMENT THIS
LIBERALIZATION, EVIDENTLY FAILED TO COME UP WITH TERMS
WHICH ALL COULD ACCEPT, AND PROJECT WAS POSTPONED
(ZAIRE'S UMBA DI LUTETE WARNED THAT IT HAD BETTER NOT BE
PUT OFF FOR LONG).

3. JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLANS FAILED SIMILARLY TO PROSPER--
PERHPAS FOR WANT OF MONEY BUT ALSO FOR WANT OF WILL.
BURUNDI IN PARTICULAR, WE UNDERSTAND, FELT SHORT-CHANGED
AND COMPLAINED THAT IT GOT NO BENEFIT FROM VARIOUS ROAD
CONSTRUCTION PROPOSALS ADVANCED. ITS PARTNERS RESPONDED
BY URGING BURUNDI TO PUT FORWARD ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT
IDEAS IN ORDER TO REDRESS THE IMBALANCE IT PERCEIVED.
DECISION ON BOTTLE FACTORY WAS EVIDENTLY TOSSED IN AS
AN APPEASEMENT.

4. CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS WERE FEW: CORNERSTONE
WAS LAID FOR CEPGL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING LT GISENYI
(SECRETARIAT HAS COMPLAINED BITTERLY AT HAVING NO
DECENT OFFICE SPACE); AND HEADQUARTERS SITE FOR PARALLEL
CEPGL DEVELOPMENT BANK WAS CHOSEN ACROSS THE ZAIRE
BORDER AT GOMA.

5. SUMMIT CLOSED WITH MUCH RITUAL FOKLORE AND QUITE
A FEW COMPLAINTS FROM VISITING DELEGATIONS ABOUT
GISENYI'S INADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR HOSTING SUCH MEETINGS.

6. COMMENT: WE HOPE TO HAVE FURTHER INFO IN COMING
DAYS ON ANY BEHIND-SCENES DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MIGHT ALTER
THE GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT SUMMIT WAS A BUST. WE ALSO
HOPE TO LEARN EXACTLY WHAT OBSTACLES LIE IN PATH OF
AGREEMENT ON LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE AND MOVEMENT ACROSS
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PAGE 03 KIGALI 01544 121632Z

BORDERS, POTENTIALLY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THESE LAND-
LOCKED COUNTRIES AND TO TOURISTS WHOM THEY HOPE TO
ATTRACT. KEEPING FRONTIER POSTS OPEN LONGER HOURS (FROM
SIX A.M. UNTIL MIDNIGHT) IS CERTAINLY A STEP IN RIGHT
DIRECTION AND WILL BE GREETED WITH PARTICULAR JOY IN
GOMA/GISENYI; BUT FAR MORE IS NEEDED, PARTICULARLY TO
REGULARIZE STATUS OF EX-RWANDANS LIVING IN NORTH KIVU,
ZAIRE, WHO EVIDENTLY NOW FACE INCREASING PRESSURES AND
PERHPAS DISCRIMINATION FROM KINSHASA.

7. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, IT WAS JUST AS AMEMBASSIES
KINSHASA AND BUJUMBURA SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE--AN
EVENT PRETTY MUCH LACKING IN DYNAMISM AND POLITICAL
WILL. AT AGE TWO, CEPGL STILL HAS A LOT OF GROWING
TO DO BEFORE IT BECOMES "AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT FOR
REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING." WE REMAIN
CONVINCED NEVERTHELESS THAT POTENTIAL IS THERE, MERITING
OUR SINCERE MORAL AND FINANCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT.
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